

THEORY AND PRACTICAL MECHANISMS OF SECURITY GUARANTEES

ТЕОРІЯ ТА ПРАКТИЧНІ МЕХАНІЗМИ ГАРАНТІЙ БЕЗПЕКИ

Mykola Kapitonenko

PhD, Associate Professor at the Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv,

e-mail: Nickolay.Kapitonenko@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2283-341X>

Микола Капітоненко

Кандидат політичних наук, доцент кафедри міжнародних відносин та зовнішньої політики Навчально-наукового інституту міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка,

e-mail: Nickolay.Kapitonenko@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2283-341X>

Abstract. *This article examines the problem of security guarantees within the contemporary international order, with a particular focus on the case of Ukraine amid the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war. Security guarantees are understood as formal and informal commitments designed to reduce existential risks for states in an anarchic international system. The study situates the debate within predominantly realist perspective. Alliance theory helps to highlight how institutions, reputational stakes, and balance-of-threat perceptions can strengthen or weaken guarantees. Evolution of both formal alliances and informal guarantees in a rapidly changing security environment has been assessed. While formal alliances such as NATO provide structured commitments, they remain contingent on political will and are challenged by collective-action problems and asymmetric burden-sharing. Informal guarantees offer flexibility but lack the deterrent clarity of treaty-based arrangements. These dynamics have become increasingly pronounced in an era of intensified great-power rivalry, diffusion of threats beyond conventional warfare, and growing reluctance of states to extend binding security guarantees. The Ukrainian case exemplifies these dilemmas.*

Keywords: *security guarantees, alliances, deterrence, international security, informal guarantees, collective defense, Russian-Ukrainian war.*

Анотація. *У статті розглядається проблема гарантій безпеки в умовах сучасного міжнародного порядку, з особливою увагою до досвіду України в умовах російсько-української війни. Гарантії безпеки розуміються як формальні та неформальні зобов'язання, спрямовані на зниження екзистенційних ризиків для держав в анархічній міжнародній системі. Дослідження побудоване переважно в руслі реалістичної парадигми. Теорія альянсів допомагає висвітлити, яким чином інститути, репутаційні фактори та сприйняття балансу загроз можуть посилювати або послаблювати гарантії безпеки. Оцінюється еволюція як формальних альянсів, так і неформальних гарантій у швидкозмінному середовищі безпеки. Хоча формальні альянси, такі як НАТО, забезпечують структуровані зобов'язання, вони залишаються залежними від політичної волі та стикаються з проблемами колективних дій і асиметричного розподілу обов'язків. Неформальні гарантії забезпечують більшу гнучкість, проте не мають такої стримувальної сили, як договірні домовленості. Ці особливості стають дедалі помітнішими в епоху загострення суперництва великих держав, поширення загроз за межі традиційної війни та зростання небажання держав надавати обов'язкові гарантії безпеки. Випадок України є показовим для розуміння цих дилем.*

Ключові слова: *гарантії безпеки, альянси, стримування, міжнародна безпека, неформальні гарантії, колективна безпека, російсько-українська війна.*

Introduction. The Russian-Ukrainian war represents one of the most serious systemic challenges to contemporary international security. Beyond the battlefield, it raises fundamental questions about the durability of existing security institutions, the credibility of deterrence, and the sustainability of the European order. Among the most acute of these questions is how to ensure Ukraine's security after the war.

Any post-war settlement will have to take into account the balance of power between Ukraine and Russia – which is not in Ukraine's favour. This imbalance, coupled with the persistence of Russian revisionism, means that traditional guarantees of sovereignty, such as international law or political declarations, are insufficient. What is required is a more comprehensive and innovative set of guarantees – formal, informal, bilateral, multilateral – designed to reduce risks of renewed aggression while anchoring Ukraine in a broader European and global security system.

That, in turn, would require deeper understanding of how security guarantees function within current system of international security; what kind of limitations they usually have; and how they are integrated into great powers' strategic calculations.

The purpose of this article is to define the concept, political implications and limits of security guarantees as an instrument of international and national security with a specific attention to Ukrainian case.

Literature Review. The issue of security guarantees lies at the intersection of debates about alliances, deterrence, and international order. In an anarchic system where states ultimately rely on self-help, the willingness and ability of stronger actors to provide credible guarantees to weaker states remains one of the most important, yet most problematic, questions of international security. The Russian-Ukrainian war has once again brought this problem to the forefront, highlighting both structural and normative challenges to the credibility of commitments.

Classical realism provides the foundation for understanding why states are often reluctant to provide robust security guarantees. Hans Morgenthau argued that states are driven by the pursuit of power and survival in an anarchic international system (Morgenthau, H., 1948). Guarantees and alliances, from this perspective, are temporary tools serving national interest, not moral commitments. States are expected to aid others only when it strengthens their own position. This self-interested logic makes commitments conditional and subject to revision when circumstances change.

Realists also emphasize the security dilemma, examined by John Herz (Herz, J, 1950) where attempts to increase security can inadvertently reduce it. A strong defense pact or extended guarantee may deter adversaries but can also provoke them, escalating arms races and tensions. Thus, classical realism frames security guarantees as inherently unstable and highly contingent on shifting perceptions of threat and interest.

Building on realist foundations, alliance theory has developed more systematic approaches to the dynamics of security commitments. Glenn Snyder, (Snyder, G., 1984) identified the 'alliance security dilemma', which has two central components: the risk of entrapment and the risk of abandonment. Entrapment occurs when a state is drawn into conflicts initiated by its ally, while abandonment refers to the danger of not receiving promised support. Both fears weaken the credibility of alliances, especially when partners have asymmetric interests and capabilities.

Alliance theory also distinguishes between formal and informal guarantees. Formal alliances, codified in treaties such as NATO's Washington Treaty, institutionalize commitments and increase credibility by raising reputational costs of defection. Informal guarantees, such as US commitments to Israel or Taiwan, rely on political declarations, arms transfers, and strategic ambiguity. These provide flexibility but create uncertainty in moments of crisis. Scholars like Stephen Walt (Walt, S., 1987) stress the importance of threat perception and balance-of-threat calculations in shaping alliance commitments.

Game-theoretical approaches enrich alliance theory by modelling security guarantees as strategic interactions. Thomas Schelling (Schelling, T., 1960) introduced the concept of 'credible commitment' as central to deterrence: guarantees only work if they convincingly lock the guarantor into a course of action. Extended deterrence requires costly signalling, forward deployment of forces, or institutional commitments that raise the cost of withdrawal.

Repeated-game models highlight reputation as a mechanism for sustaining commitments: a state that fails to defend one ally risks undermining credibility everywhere. However, commitment problems remain acute because states cannot bind themselves perfectly in an anarchic system. The temptation to free-ride or defect when costs become too high creates inherent fragility in guarantees.

Contemporary parameters of international security add new layers of complexity. The diffusion of power, rise of China, relative decline of American hegemony, and resurgence of revisionist actors like Russia have generated an environment of greater uncertainty. In this context, states hesitate to provide robust guarantees (Yarhi-Milo, K., Lanoszka, A., Cooper, Z., 2016). Nuclear dimension can also be added to the equation (Lanoszka, A., 2018).

Ukraine represents an especially difficult case for the theory and practice of security guarantees. The Budapest Memorandum, in which Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal in exchange for assurances of sovereignty and territorial integrity, is widely regarded as a failed commitment. NATO membership for Ukraine would represent the most robust form of formal guarantees, but alliance enlargement is constrained by fears of a direct war with Russia. Many NATO members are unwilling to extend Article 5 coverage to a state already in active conflict with Moscow. As a result, Ukraine has largely relied on informal guarantees: military assistance, arms transfers, intelligence sharing, and political support from the United States, the EU, and individual NATO members.

The dilemma is therefore acute: without strong guarantees, Ukraine remains vulnerable to renewed aggression but providing them risks escalation and overextension of guarantors. The situation illustrates the broader credibility problem of security guarantees in modern international relations. As Stephen Walt (Walt, S., 2023) notes, great powers balance carefully between supporting allies and avoiding costly entanglements. Ukraine is at the focus of this strategic calculus, making its case emblematic of both the limits and the necessity of credible security commitments in contemporary world politics.

Main Results of the Research. Security guarantees have reemerged as a central issue on international security agenda because the distribution of power is shifting, coercive tools are diversifying, and norms that once constrained aggression are contested. For many states, especially small and medium powers, credible guarantees are the difference between strategic vulnerability and durable sovereignty. They shape regional balances, influence arms races or restraint, and affect international regimes. In a world of renewed great-power rivalry and grey-zone coercion, the form and credibility of guarantees determine whether deterrence holds without war or fails with cascading instability.

The concept is theoretically salient because it sits at the intersection of realism, alliance theory, and game theory. Classical and neo-realist lenses underscore anarchy, self-help, and the twin alliance dilemmas of abandonment and entrapment (Snyder, G., 1984). Alliance theory explains how institutions, reputations, and threat perceptions translate into commitments with varying credibility. Game-theoretic work illuminates credible signalling, tying hands vs. sinking costs, and repeated-game reputation effects (Schelling, T., 1960); it clarifies why forward deployments, legal treaties, and integrated command structures can make promises believable. Constructivist insights add that identities, norms, and narratives of solidarity (or exclusion) condition when material guarantees are politically sustainable (Wendt, A., 1989).

Politically, guarantees are problematic because they export risk. Democracies face publics wary of distant entanglements; leaders must balance assurance for partners with escalation risks vis-à-vis rivals, including nuclear thresholds. The rise of cyber, space, and information operations blurs ‘armed attack’, challenging treaty triggers designed for conventional invasion. Meanwhile, the strain on defense industrial bases complicates the long-term sustainment that credible guarantees require. As a result, major powers increasingly mix formal alliances with informal instruments – bilateral security agreements, long-term assistance packages, joint training, prepositioning, and intelligence sharing – seeking flexible assurance without automatic war commitments (Yarhi-Milo, K., Lanoszka, A., Cooper, Z., 2016).

For Ukraine, the stakes are existential. The failure of the Budapest Memorandum exposed the limits of non-binding assurances and eroded faith in security promises more broadly. Since 2014 – and especially after 2022 – Kyiv has relied on extensive but informal guarantees: military aid,

training, and political commitments from G7 and NATO partners. These measures have been decisive on the battlefield yet fall short of the deterrent clarity of Article 5.

Unresolved questions animate the current scholarship and policy design. How can guarantors maximize deterrence while minimizing escalation risks with nuclear peers? What legal architectures (treaties vs. executive agreements) and enforcement mechanisms make peacetime promises survive crisis pressures? How should guarantees cover gray-zone aggression, such as cyberattacks, energy coercion, disinformation, that fall below traditional thresholds? Where is the optimal balance between formal guarantees and capacity-building that reduces dependence? How can burden-sharing and defense-industrial ramp-up be structured to sustain multi-year commitments? Finally, Ukraine's case raises whether credible guarantees can be extended to a country in active conflict, and if so, what sequencing – ceasefire terms, benchmarks, and integration steps – ensures both deterrence and political feasibility. The format of security guarantees becomes crucial for defining the parameters of victory, formulating a security strategy, foreign policy, and Ukraine's future development.

In a classical understanding, security guarantees are essentially defensive pacts, bilateral or multilateral, that provide for participation in war on the side of an ally under attack. The problem, however, is that there were no willing states to support Ukraine at that level before Russia's invasion, and there are none now. Moreover, as the Russo-Ukrainian war becomes part of the global struggle over the future of the international order, great powers will increasingly seek to manage their own risks carefully and avoid such binding commitments (Leeds, B, 2003; Berkemeier, M., Fuhrmann, M., 2018). Under these circumstances, it is worth considering a broader range of options, taking into account changes in the international environment and the strategic calculations of the great powers.

Strengthening national security is one of the key functions of a state; but the answer to the question of how security can be guaranteed has never been simple. It is becoming increasingly complex in today's world, characterized by growing instability, intensifying great power rivalries, and rising vulnerability of medium and small states, including Ukraine.

The Cold War model of how states can enhance their security – through alliances, military blocs, or nuclear deterrence – does not always work in today's world, which presents a far greater variety of threats. The expansion of the threat spectrum, transformation of the international order, the blurring of boundaries between war and peace, and the emergence of hybrid and unconventional forms of malign influence make the question of security guarantees even more complex.

In political practice and security theory, the phrase 'security guarantees' lacks a universally accepted definition. Moreover, it is politically charged and rather vague, especially given the numerous nuances in how 'security' itself is understood. Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus that maximizing chances for survival is the fundamental national interest of any state. This can be interpreted as enhancing national security, albeit with political nuances, interpretations, and the social context of the concept of 'security' itself.

In most cases, states lack security. Security can be understood either as a state or as a resource; these two perspectives lead to different strategies for strengthening state security (Baldwin, D., 1997). In addition, security is relative: that is, it can usually only be assessed in relation to the power capabilities or intentions of other states. This property of security creates the so-called 'security dilemma' (Herz, J., 1950) where the strengthening of one state's security leads to greater risks and threats for another. Under such conditions, it is quite difficult – or even next to impossible – to guarantee security in any meaningful sense.

But risks can certainly be reduced; and this is exactly what states do when they formulate and implement their security and foreign policies. From this perspective, security guarantees can be understood as those measures, strategies, and decisions that reduce the risks posed to a state's survival and effective functioning. The pattern of such risks varies for states depending on their historical conditions or geopolitical environment. Countering security risks takes place both internally – through proper assessment of the environment, identification of threats, strengths, and weaknesses, selection of a security strategy, allocation of resources – and through interaction with the international environment.

One such external risk to a state's security is posed by aggressive behaviour by neighbours, especially stronger neighbours. Although classical interstate wars, which are the main source of danger in the Westphalian international order, have become relatively rare in today's world, their threat remains highly serious. In Ukraine's case, this threat has become entirely real and will remain so in the foreseeable future.

Faced with a risk of invasion, smaller states may try to enhance their security by several ways. In particular, they can engage into maintaining balance of power in its classical sense, i.e., mobilizing domestic resources and/or forming coalitions; overbalancing, based on a misperception of another state's defensive intentions and leading to an arms race or escalation; strategies of waiting, appeasement, buck-passing, and bandwagoning; and underbalancing, which involves insufficient or half-hearted efforts that fail to stop a potential aggressor in time (Schweller, R., 2004). A part of this strategic choice is a search for external security commitments.

Providing security guarantees to other states entails obligations. In an anarchic international environment, such obligations can be ignored – and often are (Leeds, B., 2002), but the cost of doing so is the loss of trust and political influence. This is why most great powers – the primary providers of security guarantees – constantly face a dilemma regarding the nature, scope, and credibility of their commitments. Some states, such as China, traditionally avoid coalition obligations, preferring less formalized friendships or partnerships. Isolationism is another form of avoiding security commitments and was a long-standing feature of the foreign policies of the United Kingdom and the United States. The modern world is marked by increasing security risks, intensifying great-power competition, and the redistribution of power on a global scale. These dynamics create special conditions for resolving this dilemma, forcing states to choose between formal and informal security guarantees.

Formal alliances, a classical model of security commitments, is based on international treaties that explicitly prescribe the obligation to defend a partner state. A prominent example is the Washington Treaty of 1949, whose Article 5 provides for collective defense in the event of an attack. Such guarantees can also be enshrined in bilateral treaties, such as the 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty.

Parties to such multilateral or bilateral defense pacts are allies. Formal guarantees enjoy high legitimacy, imposing obligations on states to assist one another in case of aggression. However, the final decision still rests with the states themselves. For instance, Article 5 of the Washington Treaty stipulates that an attack on one ally shall be considered an attack on all, but each ally will respond 'as it deems necessary' (The North Atlantic Treaty, 1949). Even formally, therefore, an attack on a NATO member does not automatically mean others will engage in combat, making the alliance's effectiveness dependent on political decisions and risk assessments.

States join alliances primarily to optimize their security strategies. At the most basic level, alliances increase confidence among members regarding one another's intentions, thereby mitigating suspicion and reducing worst-case assumptions. This lessens the intensity of the security dilemma within the alliance itself and diminishes the need for constant mutual deterrence (Jervis, R., 1978). Moreover, the formation of an alliance represents one of the most effective responses to the emergence or escalation of an external threat, particularly for smaller or resource-constrained states that lack the capacity to rapidly expand their military arsenals. By pooling resources and coordinating strategies, such states can enhance deterrence against common adversaries without bearing unsustainable costs individually (Walt, S., 1987).

Alliances also serve to formalize mutual expectations. While realist theory often depicts states as rational actors guided solely by calculated power considerations, in practice they rarely remain neutral in their perceptions of others. States categorize others as friends, partners, rivals, or enemies; and on that basis they form expectations regarding how others might respond in case of aggression. Alliances institutionalize these expectations, transforming them from assumptions into more reliable commitments (Snyder, J., 1984).

The choice between self-reliance and alliance membership, however, is never straightforward. Exclusive reliance on national capabilities requires building and sustaining substantial military forces, which often entails economic trade-offs and reductions in other areas of public expenditure. Furthermore, a unilateral build-up may itself exacerbate the security dilemma

by provoking anxiety and countermeasures from neighbouring states (Mearsheimer, J., 2001). At the same time, self-reliance provides independence from external decision-makers, preserving a state's autonomy in issues of security.

The strategic value of alliances lies in their ability to deter potential aggressors, to mobilize collective assistance should deterrence fail, and to signal intentions clearly to both members and outsiders. Yet alliances also generate vulnerabilities: they tie a state's security to the choices of others and may provoke counter-alliances or aggressive moves by adversaries seeking to offset the coalition's strength (Waltz, K., 2010).

In addition, alliances face inherent collective-action problems. The benefits of collective defense are distributed relatively equally among members, while the costs of providing security are uneven. This asymmetry fosters tendencies toward free-riding, as some states underinvest in defense while relying on others to bear the burden (Olson, M., Zeckhauser, R., 1966).

Despite these shortcomings, alliances – codified as formal security commitments – remain the institutional form most closely associated with the concept of security guarantees. For potential aggressors, the existence of an alliance raises the probability that an attack on one member will trigger a collective response. As long as the balance of power is favourable, this expectation ensures that alliances continue to possess significant deterrent value in contemporary international security.

Quite often, however, guarantees take an unofficial form. In such cases, no state is legally obliged to fight on another's side in case of aggression, yet cooperation and assistance in various forms – joint exercises, arms transfers, troop deployments, political declarations – can directly influence deterrence or, if deterrence fails, affect the course and outcome of war.

Informal guarantees work not through legal commitments but by generating a sufficiently high probability of intervention by guarantor states and trust in their strength. A notable example is the informal security guarantees provided by the United States to Israel. Assurances of protection, support, or strategic partnership outside legally binding treaties offer major powers more flexibility, which is why such guarantees have become increasingly common.

Informal security guarantees are explicit or implicit commitments suggesting a high probability of political, military, or economic support in case of threats. They may take the form of political declarations, strategic partnerships, arms supplies, intelligence sharing, military exercises, or training missions. Unlike formal alliances, which are treaty-based, informal guarantees rest on political will, trust, and shared interests. Why has demand for such instruments increased?

Because alliances can not only decrease but also multiply the likelihood of a war involvement. Some states deliberately avoid long-term coalition commitments for this reason: the US, for much of its history, followed isolationist policies. But isolationism works poorly when it comes to protecting strategic interests or preserving global leadership. After World War II, Washington abandoned isolationism, as its main goals – containing the USSR, supporting free global trade, and slowing nuclear proliferation – required a new approach (Beckley, M., 2015). The US launched numerous coalitions, providing security guarantees to dozens of states. These guarantees became instruments of influence and power projection and continue to function as such today.

This leads to the so-called 'patron's dilemma'. A stronger state, interested in supporting a weaker one, often chooses between supplying arms/money and providing security guarantees (usually in the form of a defense pact). Both deter potential aggressors. Both allow the stronger state to influence the weaker one's behavior. The difference is that alliances imply binding commitments, while arms transfers or looser arrangements are forms of partnership.

When addressing this dilemma, the US seeks balance: strengthening partners' capabilities, signalling support, but avoiding entrapment in costly or risky wars. In the current climate of great-power competition, informal guarantees often look more attractive. Ukraine is experiencing these strategic calculations in real time.

Informal guarantees can be unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral, often based on shared geopolitical interests or ideological affinity. Examples include US support for Taiwan, special US-Israel relations, or the strengthening of trilateral security cooperation among Japan, India, and Australia outside formal treaties.

Their advantages include flexibility, speed, and strategic ambiguity, which can deter adversaries without provoking confrontation. They can also serve as trust-building steps toward formal alliances. However, their weakness is uncertainty: without legal force, they may be doubted in times of crisis. The lack of institutional foundations can undermine effectiveness in conflict, while reliance on informal guarantees may embolden risky behaviour by client states. Overextension by guarantors, making too many informal commitments, can also create risks.

In today's era of geopolitical turbulence and shifting alliance models, informal guarantees have become important foreign policy tools. They provide maneuvering room but require consistent political will and trust to work. Ideally, informal guarantees complement rather than replace formal mechanisms, contributing to adaptive security systems able to respond to new challenges without undermining existing structures.

Conclusions. The problem of security guarantees has once again moved to the forefront of international politics, underscored by the Russian–Ukrainian war and the broader transformations of the international order. The analysis undertaken in this article has shown that security guarantees, whether formalized through alliances or maintained through informal partnerships, remain one of the most contested but indispensable instruments of contemporary security. Their importance lies not only in the ability to deter aggression but also in shaping the broader architecture of trust, expectations, and strategic stability among states.

The theoretical debate illustrates why the credibility of guarantees is persistently fragile. Realist perspectives emphasize the conditional nature of commitments and the ever-present risks of abandonment and entrapment. Alliance theory demonstrates the institutional mechanisms through which states seek to reduce these risks, while game-theoretical approaches highlight the importance of credible signaling, reputational stakes, and costly commitments. Taken together, these approaches underline that security guarantees are not absolute assurances but rather dynamic arrangements embedded in power politics, strategic calculations, and normative frameworks.

In practice, the utility of both formal and informal guarantees is constrained by shifting geopolitical realities. The decline of unipolarity, intensification of great-power rivalry, and expansion of hybrid threats have all complicated the provision of credible commitments. Major powers increasingly weigh the risks of escalation against the costs of inaction, often preferring flexible, informal guarantees to rigid defense pacts. This tendency, however, reduces deterrent clarity and leaves recipients vulnerable to renewed coercion or aggression. The resulting gap between demand for guarantees and willingness to supply them constitutes a central dilemma of today's security environment.

Ukraine's case is emblematic of these challenges. The country's current reliance on informal guarantees – arms transfers, intelligence cooperation, financial and political support – has provided critical but limited protection. What remains unresolved is whether Ukraine can obtain durable, binding guarantees that will not only deter Russia but also anchor it within a stable European security architecture. This question is at once a national and systemic one: Ukraine's future security will directly affect the stability of Europe and the credibility of the broader system of international guarantees.

Ultimately, security guarantees cannot eliminate the risks inherent in an anarchic world, but they can reduce them in meaningful ways. Their effectiveness depends on clarity, credibility, and sustainability. For Ukraine, and for the international system more broadly, designing guarantees that meet these criteria will be central to the future of deterrence, alliance politics, and the viability of international order in the twenty-first century.

References:

1. Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 5/12/1994 / <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280401fbb>
2. Baldwin, D. (1997). The Concept of Security. *Review of international Studies*, 23, 5-26.
3. Beckley, M. (2015). The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of US Defense Pacts. *International Security*, 39(4), 7-48.

4. Berkemeier, M., Fuhrmann, M. (2018). Reassessing the Fulfillment of Alliance Commitments in War. *Research&Politics*, 5(2)
5. Herz, J. (1950). Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. *World Politics*, 2(2), 157-180.
6. Jervis, R. (1978). Cooperation under the security dilemma. *World Politics*, 30(2), 167–214.
7. Lanoszka, A. (2018). *Atomic Assurance: the Alliance Politics of Nuclear Proliferation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
8. Leeds, B. (2003). Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3), 427-439.
9. Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton.
10. Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
11. Olson, M., Zeckhauser, R. (1966). An economic theory of alliances. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 48(3), 266–279.
12. Schelling, T. (1960). *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
13. Schweller, R. (2004). Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing, *International Security*, 29(2), 159-201.
14. Snyder, G. (1984). The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), 461-495.
15. The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 4 April, 1949 / https://www.nato.int/cps/uk/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en
16. Walt, S. (1987). *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
17. Walt, S. (2023). Friends in need: What the war in Ukraine has revealed about alliances. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/friends-need>
18. Waltz, K. (2010). *Theory of international politics*. New York: Waveland Press.
19. Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
20. Yarhi-Milo, K., Lanoszka, A., Cooper, Z. (2016). To arm or to ally? The patron's dilemma and the strategic logic of arms transfers and alliances. *International Security*, 41(2), 90-139.